

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 071024Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 1499

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR US IS XF
SUBJECT: NORMALIZATION OF ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS IN SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

REF: STATE 046389

1. EMBASSY DAMASCUS SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE REFTEL IS PRECEDED BY TWO CAVEATS: FIRST, SARG TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO BE FIRST IN ACCEPTING, MUCH LESS LAUNCHING, NEW IDEAS FOR SETTLEMENT. ITS PREFERRED POSTURE HAS BEEN TO FOLLOW EGYPT'S LEAD IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS AND AT VERY LEAST TO INSIST THAT ANY INITIATIVE BE TAKEN IN HARMONY WITH EGYPT, JORDAN AND PLO. SECOND, IDEAS PRESENTED BELOW REFLECT IN-HOUSE EMBASSY THINKING. IN SYRIA NEITHER OFFICIALS NOR PRIVATE CITIZENS ARE PRONE TO ARTICULATE HOW THEY WOULD ENVISAGE DEVELOPMENT OF NORMAL ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS AS RESULT OF PEACE AGREEMENT. SARG OF YEARS PAST HAS INSISTED THAT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS NOT ONLY BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 LINES, BUT THAT 1967 BORDERS WILL BE THE FINAL RESULT, EVEN THOUGH TOTAL WITH-

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DRAWAL MAY TAKE PLACE IN PHASES. THIS VIEWPOINT LED SYRIA TO REJECT UN RES 242 FOR MORE THAN SIX YEARS AND TO BACK INTO ACCEPTANCE OF 242 THROUGH ACCEPTANCE OF UN RES 338, ACCOMPANIED BY EXPLANATORY STATEMENT THAT ITS UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL WAS TO RESULT. SYRIAN RELUCTANCE TO SPECULATE ON THE CONTENT OF PEACE PROBABLY DERIVES BOTH FROM SKEPTICISM THAT ISRAEL WILL AGREE

TO THE BASIC SYRIAN POSITION ON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL--AND THEREFORE "WHY BOTHER TO THINK ABOUT SPECIFICS OF PEACE?"--AS WELL AS FACT THAT MOST SYRIANS HAVE SIMPLY NOT THOUGHT VERY HARD YET ABOUT PEACE.

2. PALESTINIAN AND JEWISH STIMULI ON SYRIAN POLICY:

COMPARED TO SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS APPEAR QUITE ADVANCED IN GRAPPLING WITH IMPLICATIONS OF PEACE. IT IS NATURAL ANDINEVITABLE FOR PALESTINIANS TO THINK OF PEACE IN TERMS OF RETURN AND INTERCHANGE WHEREAS THE SYRIAN INCLINATION IS TO VIEW PEACE AS A MORE PASSIVE COEXISTENCE OF TWO BASICALLY SEPARATE COMMUNITIES. PALESTINIAN THINKING ON QUESTION OF REUNIFICATION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, VISITS AND RESUMPTION OF FULL SCOPE OF NORMAL FAMILY INTERCOURSE WILL DEVELOP RAPIDLY AND DIRECTLY AFFECT DEVELOPMENT OF SYRIAN POLICY SINCE SOME 300,000 PALESTINIANS RESIDE IN SYRIA. THERE WILL LIKEWISE BE PRESSURE BY FORMER SYRIAN JEWS, NOW ISRAELI CITIZENS, TO VISIT THEIR RELATIVES HERE AND DEMANDS BY ISRAELI JEWS FROM SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES SEEKING COMPENSATION FOR LOST PROPERTY. THESE PRESSURES WILL STIMULATE A WHOLE BODY OF NEW LAW AND CUSTOM TO COVER PROBLEMS SUCH AS INHERITANCE, COMPENSATION, REPATRIATION, TRAVEL, SALE OF PROPERTY, ETC. THESE IN TURN COULD SPILL OVER INTO OTHER AREA, VIZ., NEED FOR AGREEMENT TO HONOR CONSULAR AUTHENTICATIONS OF SIGNATURES ON LEGAL DOCUMENTS, TRANSLATIONS AND OTHER PAPER WORK GENERATED BY FAMILY AND PROPERTY CASES. WE EXPECT PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI INTERCHANGE TO DEVELOP WELL IN ADVANCE OF SYRIAN-

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ISRAELI INTERCHANGE.

3. AS FAR AS SYRIA'S OWN INITIATIVES IN SETTLEMENT CONTEXT ARE CONCERNED, WE VISUALIZE THESE AS FALLING INTO THREE CATEGORIES OF INCREASING DIFFICULTY FOR SYRIA. CATEGORY A CONTAINS IDEAS WHICH WE BELIEVE SYRIANS WOULD HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN TABLING AT BEGINNING OF DISCUSSIONS ABOUT A SETTLEMENT. CATEGORY B IDEAS WOULD POSE CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES FOR SYRIA BUT MIGHT BE TABLED ONCE PHASED WITHDRAWAL IS UNDER WAY. CATEGORY C CITES A FEW LIMITED IDEAS WHICH WE CONSIDER SYRIA COULD ONLY AGREE TO ONCE PHASED WITHDRAWAL HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

4. CATEGORY A:

A. FORMAL AGREEMENT TO INSURE PROMPT REPATRIATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND ANIMALS WHO STRAY ACROSS EXISTING BOUNDARIES.

B. AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO JOINT SURVEY BY BILATERAL

COMMISSION OF NEGOTIATED BOUNDARIES TO PINPOINT MUTUALLY
SATISFACTORY LOCATION OF LINES AND TO ACCORD OFFICIAL MAPS
OF BOTH PARTIES TO THOSE LINES.

C. EXPANDED USE OF GOLAN CROSSING POINT TO PERMIT
PASSAGE BY THIRD COUNTRY TRAVELERS SUCH AS JOURNALISTS,
TOURISTS, BUSINESSMEN AND DIPLOMATS.

D. RECIPROCAL CURRENCY CONVERTIBILITY AT BORDER
CROSSINGS FOR ABOVE TRAVELERS.

E. CANCELING PROHIBITION ON ENTRY INTO SYRIA OF VISITORS
WITH ISRAELI VISAS IN PASSPORTS.

F. AGREEMENT ON THIRD COUNTRY CIVILIAN OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCES.

G. FORMAL UNDERSTANDING ON TAPLINE MAINTENANCE AND
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OPERATION AS LONG AS THAT SECTION OF GOLAN REMAINS OCCUPIED.

H. OFFER TO SIGN AND RATIFY NPT OR NEW AGREEMENT ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND AGREEMENTS ON GENERAL DISARMAMENT SUCH
AS THOSE OUTLAWING CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE.

5. CATEGORY B (ONCE PHASED WITHDRAWAL UNDER WAY):

A. AGREEMENT TO PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF MILITARY MANEUVERS
ON GOLAN.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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B. PERMISSION FOR THIRD COUNTRY FLIGHTS STOPPING IN ISRAEL TO LAND IN DAMASCUS AND FOR RECIPROCAL OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS FOR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL CARRIERS. ALLOWING THIRD COUNTRY SHIPS STOPPING IN ISRAELI PORTS ACCESS TO SYRIAN PORTS.

C. RECIPROCAL APPLICATION OF GENERALLY RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES, SUCH AS COPYRIGHT AND TRADEMARK LAWS.

D. AGREEMENT ON TIMETABLE AND TERMS FOR PROGRESSIVE LIFTING OF ARAB BOYCOTT.

E. PERMIT TRADE WITH WEST BANK THROUGH GOLAN AND VISITS BY PALESTINIANS RESIDENT IN SYRIA TO WEST BANK.

6. CATEGORY C (PROBABLE ONLY WHEN WITHDRAWAL HAS BEEN COMPLETED):

A. INITIATE BILATERAL VISITS BEGINNING WITH CONTACTS OF PROFESSIONAL GROUPS SUCH AS UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS AND DOCTORS TO COOPERATE ON CLEARLY DEFINED TOPICS SUCH AS
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ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, EXCHANGE OF METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION, ETC. WE JUDGE THESE ARE THE GROUPS IN SYRIAN SOCIETY FOR WHICH SARG WILL BE MOST PREPARED TO APPROVE CONTACTS WITH ISRAELI COUNTERPARTS. TREATMENT OF SYRIAN PATIENTS IN ISRAELI MEDICAL FACILITIES.

B. NEGOTIATE ISRAELI ACCESS TO GOLAN WATER SOURCES.

C. MEDIA EXCHANGES, INCLUDING POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF TELEVISION RELAY STATIONS ON GOLAN.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF MAIL, TELEPHONE AND TELEX SERVICE.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF LIMITED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INCLUDING CONSULAR SERVICES.

F. PERMIT OPEN EMIGRATION OF SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY.

7 U.S. ACTIONS:

TO IMPROVE ATMOSPHERICS WHEN ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS UNDER WAY, USG COULD URGE SARG IMPOSE MORATORIUM ON ITS MEDIA CRITICISMS OF ISRAEL. (SYRIA HAS TURNED ITS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON AND OFF AT WILL AGAINST ARAB COUNTRIES.) HOWEVER, SYRIANS WILL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO USE THEIR MEDIA TO PROMOTE THEMES OF ARAB SOLIDARITY AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AS THEY ENGAGE DIPLOMATICALLY WITH ISRAEL. IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR SYRIANS TO CONCEIVE OF DOING THIS WITHOUT TARGETING ISRAEL IN PROCESS. FURTHERMORE, IT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PLANK OF SYRIAN POLICY OVER PAST YEARS TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON ISRAEL AND WIN STATUS FOR PLO THROUGH AGGRESSIVE ACTION TO ISOLATE ISRAEL IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT SYRIA (OR OTHER ARABS) TO FOREGO SUCH ACTIONS MERELY IN THE HOPE THAT ISRAEL WOULD THEREBY BECOME MORE AMENABLE TO NEGOTIATIONS. BUT WE DO NOT RULE OUT PROSPECT OF CONVINCING EVEN DAMASCUS

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TO AGREE TO MORATORIUM ON SUCH ACTIONS AS SOON AS NEGOTIATIONS SHOW SUBSTANTIAL SIGNS OF PROGRESS.

8. EARLY ON IN NEGOTIATIONS, SOME SORT OF MIXED SYRIAN-ISRAELI COMMISSION, WITH BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES, WOULD HAVE TO BE FORMED TO DISCUSS BILATERAL ISSUES WHICH USG, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTIES THEMSELVES WOULD TABLE. (SUCH COMMISSION NEED NOT BE IN CONFLICT WITH ASAD'S PROCLAIMED INTEREST IN HAVING "FUNCTIONAL" COMMISSIONS RATHER THAN BI-NATIONAL ONES AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH ITS FORM AND COMPETENCE WOULD NECESSARILY PARALLEL THOSE OF OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN WORKING OUT SETTLEMENT DETAILS.) NUCLEUS OF SUCH BODY ALREADY EXISTS IN UNDOF MECHANISM FOR HANDLING DRUZE FAMILY REUNIONS ON GOLAN. THERE IS ALSO THE LONG FROZEN ISRAELI-SYRIAN MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION. WE WOULD FORESEE WHATEVER MECHANISM WERE ORIGINALLY CHOSEN GRADUALLY BECOME MORE FORMAL WITH DECREASING UN INVOLVEMENT IN FAVOR OF DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES. WE WOULD ALSO FORESEE GRADUALLY EXPANDING ACTIVITY AND AUTHORITY OF COMMISSION'S CIVILIAN COMPONENT.

9. CLEARLY OUR IDEAS FOR SYRIAN INITIATIVES IN CATEGORY C FALL SIGNIFICANTLY SHORT OF PREDICTABLE ISRAELI EXPECTATIONS. WE CONSIDER IT UNREALISTIC AND MISLEADING, HOWEVER, AT THIS POINT TO ATTEMPT TO CATALOGUE FULL RANGE OF HYPOTHETICAL SYRIAN-ISRAELI LINKS ONCE WITHDRAWAL COMPLETED. SYRIA'S READINESS TO MOVE POLITICALLY WILL BE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON MOMENTUM GENERATED IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS AND IN PARTICULAR, HOW ISRAEL DEALS WITH SYRIAN DEMAND FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND HOW SATISFIED DAMASCUS IS WITH WAY AGREEMENT HAS DEALT WITH "PALESTINIAN

NATIONAL RIGHTS." AS ASAD SAID CRYPTICALLY TO SECRETARY
FEBRUARY 20, "AS FOR THE FUTURE, IF WHAT IS
ACHIEVED (AFTER TERMINATION OF STATE OF WAR) IS GOOD,
THE SOMETHING MORE MIGHT COME OUT OF IT. IF WHAT IS
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ACHIEVED IS NOT GOOD, THEN SOMETHING BAD WOULD RESULT."
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Message Attributes

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